

In 2007 the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO), a subordinate unit of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), hosted an International Information Operations Seminar at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Twelve countries from six continents participated: India, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Senegal, Taiwan, Israel, Argentina, Chile, Canada, Australia, and the US.

The IO perspectives provided are solely those of the authors and not those of the nation he or she represents. All discussions were conducted at the “unclassified” level. Chatham House rules were in effect, meaning that what was said at the seminar cannot be attributed to any individual speaker or their affiliation/organization. This also means the seminar discussions will not be published, only the prepared texts found in this journal.

Each representative was asked to answer three questions: How have information operations changed in their respective countries over the past ten years? How can countries neutralize an extremist’s use of the Internet? And what new ideas in regard to information operations or other cyber-related issues are emerging from their countries perspective? In addition to the twelve countries noted, FMSO attempted to answer the same questions based on Chinese materials.

Some representatives were able to easily answer all three questions while others, due to other priorities in their defense departments or simply due to a lack of cyber capabilities and thus cyber experience, were limited to answering only one or more questions in detail. Each country focused on different aspects of IO according to its particular IO context and perspective. There is no FMSO comment on these. Rather the reader must judge for him or herself whether the recommendations and points of interest offered by each speaker are worthy of further consideration.

A few general conclusions can be drawn from this short summary of the country representatives prepared presentations. First, there are still many different ways to define IO. While some

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of the countries’ definitions clearly were modeled after the US definition developed years ago, there were several countries (Ukraine and Australia in particular) that are moving in different directions. Bulgaria is working on an effects-based frame of reference as much as on an IO frame of reference, it appeared, as it strives to work closely with NATO. Second, several countries highlighted (such as India did) the economic aspect of IO. This is a point of concern to several countries. According to one Chinese author, who was not a part of this seminar, “war with the objective of expanding territory has already basically withdrawn from the stage of history, and even war with the objective of fighting for natural resources is now giving way to war with the objective of controlling the flow of financial capital.” It appears that the integration of civilian and military systems and the focus on critical infrastructure protection has caused serious concern in the future economic

perspective of several countries. Third, two items appear to have the interest of all participants: first, that critical infrastructure protection is of paramount concern (Chile, Argentina, Taiwan, etc.) and second, that nations have to do more to control extremist’s use of the Web (as highlighted by Canada and Israel in particular). Fourth, one nation, Russia, called for expanded definitions of the term information weapon and for expanded use of the United Nations to control these “weapons.” Finally, Senegal highlighted the wide gap in complex information system development between nations. That country focuses mainly on the psychological operations aspect of IO and not on computer network operations as others are doing.

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